

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 153700

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EFIN, MCAP, GW, NATO

SUBJECT: OFFSET

REF: BONN 10277

1. JUNE 27 USIS WIRELESS FILE CARRIES COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON OFFSET FROM JUNE 26 DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING.

2. FYI. AS EMBASSY AWARE, FRG HAS MADE NO FORMAL RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT'S MAY 3 LETTER TO CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT WHICH PROPOSED NEGOTIATIONS CONCERNING A NEW OFFSET AGREEMENT. IN BRIEF ORAL EXCHANGE BETWEEN SCHMIDT AND SECRETARY LAST MONTH, CHANCELLOR EXPRESSED RELUCTANCE TO CONCLUDE A NEW AGREEMENT, AND SECRETARY REPLIED THAT WE WOULD LOOK INTO THE QUESTION. AS A RESULT WE ARE NOW ENGAGED IN ANOTHER REVIEW OF OUR OPTIONS. PENDING CONCLUSION OF THIS REVIEW
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PAGE 02 STATE 153700

AND DECISION CONCERNING ANY NEW APPROACH TO FRG, DEPARTMENT

BELIEVES THAT IT IS NOT IN INTEREST OF EITHER SIDE TO MAKE UNCOORDINATED PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND COMMENTS ON THIS ISSUE. PRESS REPORTS BASED ON FRG STATEMENTS AS REPORTED REFTEL HAVE KINDLED GROWING CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST IN OFFSET QUESTION. END FYI.

3. ACCORDINGLY, YOU SHOULD APPROACH FRG GOVERNMENT AT HERMES LEVEL TO MAKE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. QUESTION OF NEW OFFSET AGREEMENT IS BEING LOOKED AT AGAIN AS SECRETARY INDICATED TO CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT.

B. AS FRG WELL AWARE, OFFSET OF BALANCE-OF-PAYMENTS COSTS INCURRED BY US TROOP PRESENCE IN NATO EUROPE IS MATTER OF CONTINUING CONCERN TO CONGRESS.

C. UNCOORDINATED PUBLIC COMMENTS AND STATEMENTS ABOUT OFFSET MAKE IT SIGNIFICANTLY MORE DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURES WHILE MATTER IS UNDER REVIEW.

D. WE SUGGEST, THEREFORE, THAT IN PUBLIC ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS CONCERNING FUTURE OFFSET, BOTH GOVERNMENTS CONFINE THEMSELVES TO SAYING THAT QUESTION OF NEW OFFSET AGREEMENT IS UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION AND THAT IT IS PREMATURE TO SPECULATE ON THE OUTCOME.

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